With the Grain

CONTEMPORARY PANEL PAINTING

The Whitney Museum of American Art, Fairfield County, is funded by Champion International Corporation.

This exhibition was organized by Roni Feinstein, Branch Director, Whitney Museum of American Art, Fairfield County. Special thanks are extended to Cynthia Roznoy, Manager, for exhibition research, and to Holly Manley, Gallery Assistant, for assistance with the preparation of the catalogue.

Cover:
John Torreano, *P.M.'s Mum*, 1986

© 1990 Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10021

With the Grain

CONTEMPORARY PANEL PAINTING

Roni Feinstein

March 9–May 9, 1990

Whitney Museum of American Art, Fairfield County

NED SMYTH

Flora Series: Fusion, 1989

Before the Renaissance, wood was the primary support for paintings. Even after canvas replaced it in popularity, wood supports continued at times to be used, although generally for works of an intimate scale. Today, however, it appears that more artists are working on wood panels than at any point since the late fifteenth century, and many are doing so in monumental scale. More important, contemporary artists are using wood panels in a manner unprecedented in the history of art: rather than cover or obscure the wood with paint, they are permitting not only the wood but its grain to show through and are exploiting the patterns of the grain as an integral part of their imagery.

The purpose of this exhibition is to identify and explore this widespread phenomenon in contemporary American painting, which began in the early 1980s. The intentions, aesthetic philosophies, and formal and conceptual strategies of the seventeen artists represented in the exhibition vary widely, their work ranging from the realistic to the surrealistic and from the formally oriented to the conceptual. Yet each appropriates the grain of the wood for both formal and iconographic ends.

Several historical parallels can be considered in relation to this new trend. The first is Cubism: the 1911–12 collages of Braque incorporated wallpaper printed with a wood-grain (*faux bois*) pattern, and the paintings of around the same time of both Braque and Picasso featured passages of *trompe l'oeil* with simulated wood grain. The grained wallpaper asserted the tangible flatness of the picture surface, while the *faux bois* patterns, vernacular elements appropriate to the still-life subjects in which they most often appeared, served as literal references to tables, paneled walls, and so on. At the same time, the inclusion of such elements raised questions about illusion and reality, since they were but images or signs of the real.

If Cubism offered formal and conceptual inducements for the use of wood and wood-grain patterns, Surrealism offered emotional and psychological motivations. Max Ernst's *frottages* (rubbings), begun in the early twenties, were drawings based on the random patterns of wooden floors. Ernst would place sheets of paper on such floors, rub the backs with black lead, then use the resulting patterns to spur his imag-

VIKKY ALEXANDER

Mahogany Square Tile #5, 1989

ination to produce fantastic landscapes, animals, and hybrid forms. While Ernst saw wood grain as a surface design filled with latent imagery, to René Magritte it was capable of emotional evocations, with its swirling, unpredictable patterns. In his paintings from the mid-1920s, he used *trompe l'oeil* wood grain to abet the disquieting, unsettling nature of his imagery. The emotionality of wood grain had been explored at the turn of the century in Edvard Munch's woodcut *The Kiss* (1897–1902), one of the most famous examples of the use of wood grain in art. In this Symbolist work, two lovers merge into a single monolithic form in the center of a field of wood grain, the liquid patterns of the grain seeming not only to define and unite the figures but also to signify their melting passion.

These precedents, as will be seen, play in different ways on the works of the artists in the exhibition. But more immediate questions also need to be asked: Why are so many artists today working on wood and with wood grain? What does wood have to offer them that canvas cannot, or can no longer, provide? For many, the idea of painting on canvas seems outmoded—too traditional, too weighted with art history. Working on wood allows them to be painters and still be contemporary. They tend to exploit the wood for its physicality, immediacy, and objecthood, and often blur the distinctions not only between painting and sculpture, but, in the frequent reference to walls, between painting and architecture as well.

Wood also offers a different way of dealing with the demands of surface. A deep-seated distrust of illusionism has existed in American painting since midcentury; flatness has been the preferred and dominant mode. A mark on a canvas introduces a "figure" to an empty, boundless field. A mark on a plank of wood, however, is a mark in a sea of marks, and though it may establish a figure-ground relationship, a phenomenon of perception ensures that the sheer fact of the wood holds the image flat. This effect recalls the tension between real and depicted space in Cubist collages: no matter how deep a space and how convincingly round a shape appears, the viewer's eye is brought back to the picture plane by the flat surface of the wood. But at the same time, wood-grain patterns often assume a topographical aspect, space being implied by the concentric design of the rills, so that the wood itself asserts and denies its own illusionism.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of wood for contemporary practice is that, unlike canvas, it is not a passive support; it does not provide a blank slate upon which to paint. The grain of the wood gives the artist a readymade pattern, something found and outside the self to respond to and work from. The impulse to work on wood can therefore be understood as related to that which led many artists in the 1980s to take up image appropriation—the quotation, confiscation, and general recycling of images from contemporary culture, the mass media, and art history. In fact, four of the artists in the exhibition—Vikky Alexander, Sherrie Levine, and Doug and Mike Starn—work or have worked both with appropriated photographic imagery and with wood supports.

Unlike images used in appropriation art, which are drawn from past art and present culture, wood-grain patterns are created by nature. The designs are unpredictable and random, the calligraphy of nature. They are also, as the Surrealists noted, biomorphic: swirling, curving, connoting movement, life, and change. Beyond this, wood tends to convey a certain feeling of warmth and intimacy because of its natural, earthy tones and the part it plays in our daily lives. Artists who work with wood generally seek to exploit these very qualities. Even if the piece is conceptually or formally based, even when the intention is to comment on contemporary culture, wood tends to carry strong associations with landscape elements, associations often enlisted as part of the content. There is in this work, therefore, a certain compatibility between material and subject matter and between subject matter and form—as well as a tendency to romanticism.

More than half the artists in the exhibition work on plywood, an industrially processed material that seems quintessentially unromantic in nature. In manufacture since the early years of this century, plywood consists of sheets of wood glued or cemented together with grains of adjacent layers arranged at right or wide angles. It can be faced with a number of different woods and it features elliptically shaped "knots," plugs inserted into the surface where holes and other weak points appear. The exposed grain of plywood made its first noteworthy appearance in art in the early seventies in Donald Judd's large-scale installations of unpainted plywood boxes. Although his use of plywood was structural rather than pictorial, he intro-

CARROLL DUNHAM

Pine Gap, 1985–86

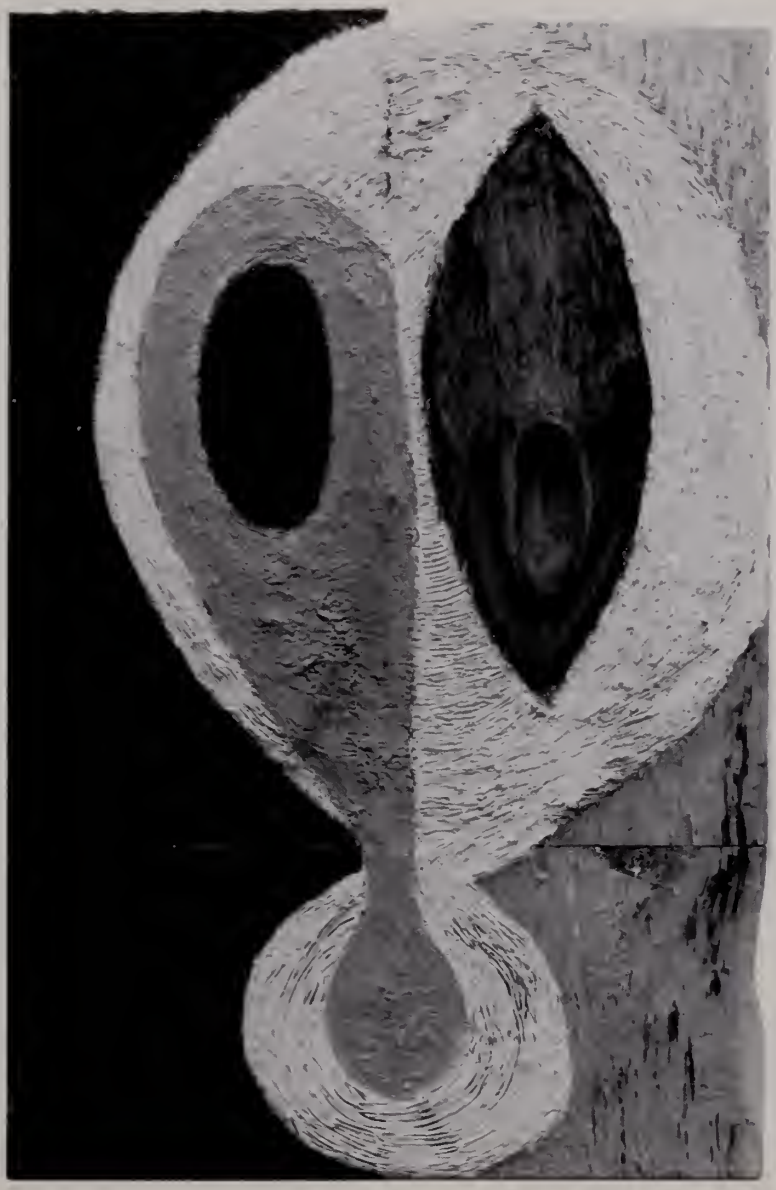
duced an inexpensive, manufactured material to the realm of art. The past few years have seen the elevation of plywood to a higher aesthetic plane. This is true not only for the fine arts but for decoration as well, as the exposed wood grain of plywood on walls and in furniture became something of a chic design element in the 1980s. For several artists in the exhibition, however, among them Sherrie Levine, Ford Beckman, and the Starn Twins, the humble origins of plywood and plywood's lowly classification in the world of woods is important to the content and/or experience of their art.

John Torreano, another artist in the exhibition, recently declared, "Plywood is today's marble," and drew an analogy between Michelangelo's visits to the quarry to select the perfect piece of marble, with veins, markings, and stratification appropriate to a given form, and contemporary artists' visits to the lumberyard. Torreano's statement is revealing in two ways: it testifies to the aestheticization of plywood, and to the selectivity of artists about their wood in general, whether about the markings of an individual board or the patterns and other properties of a particular type of wood. Each wood has its own surface quality and takes paint differently—the knots and grain of pine, for instance, come through layers of paint, while the grain of birch and lauan is easily obscured.

Carroll Dunham, a highly influential painter who was among the first to work on wood surfaces in the 1980s, is indeed selective about the woods he employs, for their markings generate his imagery. Dunham works on thin sheets of wood veneer, which he mounts on plywood or plastic backings; in many cases, he assembles veneers of different woods in a single work. In *Pine Gap* (1985–86), for example, two vertical strips of pine veneer bracket a slightly narrower "panel" of elm. Dunham works improvisationally. He circles the pine knots and then connects the dots with either thick or thin, straight or curving lines; as these lines soar across, around, and into the central strip of elm, the space of the picture becomes highly ambiguous. He traces the whorling patterns of the elm grain, producing stainlike, randomly curling forms reminiscent of simple biological organisms viewed through a microscope. At a single point on each of the panels, the traced and circled markings on the wood erupt into larger, illusionistically rendered forms resembling internal body organs, which are recurrent motifs in his art. Inspired by the patterns of veneers, Dunham creates a world teeming with forms that interact in a space where the flat and the round and foreground and background are in constant flux. His process is strongly related to Surrealist automatism, the use of found or spontaneously generated designs to provoke invention, as in the *frottages* of Max Ernst.

Also related to abstract Surrealism and automatism are the intimately scaled biomorphic abstractions of Julie Fromme. In *Onionhead* (1989), Fromme creates whimsical personages recalling those in the work of Joan Miró. She uses the same or similar images, reworking them with modest variations in shape, color contrast, and surface texture according to the dictates of the individual pine or plywood panels—thus a knot in the support of *Onionhead* became an eye. Hers is an intuitive, process-oriented art: she gouges out and chips away at the wood, applies multiple layers of paint, and often uses a fork to create paint textures that approximate those of the scraped-away wood.

It is the representational branch of Surrealism that offers a precedent for the work of the Mexican-American painter Ray Smith, who creates haunting pictures filled with fantastic, dreamlike imagery. His wall-size groupings of wood panels, on which he has been working for several years, are a natural extension of his early training as a fresco painter in Mexico. The surface of the monumental *La Niña de los Lirios* (The Girl of the Lilies) of 1987 is only partially painted, leaving large sections of unpainted wood grain exposed. Given the nature of the pine, the grain makes itself known even in the painted areas. Against a ground of two large white ovoids (lily pads?) in a liquid sea of wood grain is a reclining female nude, her form drawn with charcoal lines and almost completely free of paint except for the white that emphasizes her masklike face with its hypnotic stare. The woman is being clasped by a large green frog, while several smaller frogs move over her body. A frog extending from her head like a tiara and another whose hindquarters are merged with the heel of her foot reinforce her magical connection to these amphibian creatures. The wood grain that forms part of her body and the ground further suggests her absorption into the world of nature. If Smith's imagery can be described



JULIE FROMME

Onionhead, 1989

RAY SMITH

La Niña de los Lirios, 1987

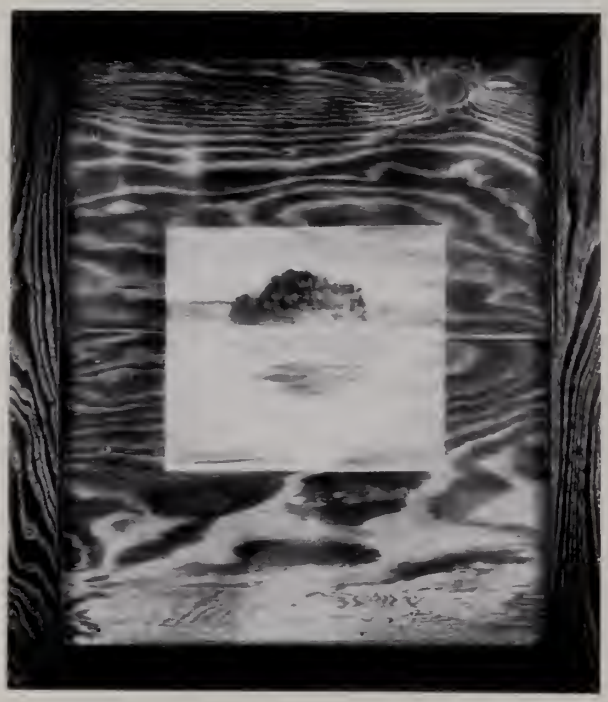
MICHAEL BYRON

A Fool's Goodbye #2, 1989

as Surrealist, the treatment of the subject recalls Munch's *The Kiss* in the way in which wood-grain patterns integrate the woman with her surroundings. Rather than express the union of two lovers, however, Smith's intention is to create a symbol of fertility.

Michael Bryon's *A Fool's Goodbye #2* (1989) also looks back to representational forms of Surrealism in its odd juxtapositions of images in an oneiric atmosphere. The clown has been silkscreened onto the surface, and a hand with a face painted on it (a tiny hat hovers amusingly just above) seems to extend from the sleeve of a man concealed behind a door. Also visible are a few clusters of tiny people, a dancing woman in high heels, and silhouettes of skyscrapers. The space is as ambiguous as the content and the plywood support adds to the spatial complexity. Thinly covered with veils and washes of color, the undulating wood-grain patterns contribute to the misty, vaporous atmosphere and to the illusion of deep space in the area "behind" the clown. At the same time, the wood support holds the surface at right close to what appears to be the wood door.

Robert Helm's *Wind on Monday* (1987) calls to mind the representational Surrealism of Magritte.



MICHAEL MAZUR

Confluence, 1989

But Helm's painting offers a kind of reverse *trompe l'oeil* because what first appears to be painted wood is actually exquisitely crafted wood inlay that is combined with painted forms. In a distinctly breezeless landscape, a windowless wood building is poised at the edge of a promontory, while the sun sets romantically over the sea. The wood inlay works both to assert and deny illusionism. It connotes illusionistic space through its perspectival structure and through the painted landscape elements that overlap at the bottom edge. The patterns of the grain rhyme hauntingly with the painted clouds, rocks, and rise of the land. Yet illusionism is denied by the inlaid ash of the building, which echoes the ash of the meticulously worked frame; the frame, created by Helm, thus becomes an integral part of the piece.

Like Helm, Michael Mazur, a realist painter whose art often tends toward romanticism, discovers suggestions for landscape images in the patterns of the grain. In *Confluence* (1989), he exploits a natural split in the grain of his support to create a landscape in the form of a picture in a picture. The division suggests the point at which the land (or island) stops and its reflection in the water begins. Having charred the wood to further emphasize the pattern of the grain, Mazur then lets the grain determine the configuration of the clouds, their reflection, and the ripples in the water.

It is the fact of the wood support more than the grain that affects Ned Smyth's new paintings on wood. Earlier in his career, Smyth had drawn imagery from ancient cultures, but in his recent *Flora Series* triptychs, he invented an imagery drawn from nature, in which trunks, limbs, and cross-sections of trees overlap and interact in a charged symbolic space. Large, unpainted wood panels bracket painted panels at top and bottom, yielding an architectural dimension related to that in Smyth's earlier work. In *Flora Series: Fusion* (1989), exposed wood also appears in the trees in the center panel, whose forms and tones suggest the limbs of human figures. The radiant white orb at left and the equally bright cross at right, together with the triptych format itself, suggest a quasi-religious meditation on man's existence and his place in the cosmos.

Like Smyth, Jim Napierala works with the triptych format, and he further exploits religious associations by using shapes that suggest altarpieces and

enclosing his works in gold-leaf frames. Napierala claims that an early Christian icon of a Madonna and Child that survived a fire in a church in Poland had an important influence on his art; it is relevant not only to the iconic appearance of his works, but also to his practice of charring the wood panels before painting on them. *Drum* (1989) is a triptych whose central panel features one round, two elliptical, and a series of smaller square forms hovering in apparent gravitational relation to one another against a seemingly boundless outer space. Wood grain plays an important part in this work by generating spatial illusions and by lending the entire surface a hypnotic, otherworldly quality. Napierala creates this unreal atmosphere by painting (with the aid of a graining tool) *trompe l'oeil* grain on the left and right panels and on the elements suspended at center, so that the patterns are somewhat exaggerated.

For the past several years, John Torreano has exploited the illusionism inherent in wood-grain patterns to suggest the infinite space of the cosmos. In his large painting *P.M.'s Mum* (1986), a multitude of long straight lines and irregular curving forms radiate outward from a central core in an expansive, boundless environment. Two superposed plywood panels are unevenly stained with dark green paint to accentuate the horizontal patterns of the grain. The lines that move with great force out from the center and the fatter, slower-moving squiggles are sliced into and gouged out from the facing sheets of the plywood; the grain revealed in the unpainted cutaway elements (about half of them are painted black) runs vertically. There are also small cutout circles liberally scattered across the work, some of which have been filled with fake gems that sparkle as they catch the light, suggesting stars. Although a cosmological reading of *P.M.'s Mum* is possible, the title refers to the watercolors of chrysanthemums produced earlier in the century by Piet Mondrian. The painting's radiating pattern can thus be seen as an analogue to the flower's structure. Torreano's work, then, is both a microcosmic and macrocosmic view: one can find in a flower the map of the universe and in the universe the design of a flower.

From Torreano's chaotic, activated fields to the order and stasis of Ford Beckman's abstractions at first seems to be a giant leap, but Beckman's paintings also embrace disorder. In his two-panel work of 1989,

JOHN R. THOMPSON

Constructive Topography, 1989

ROBERT HELM

Wind on Monday, 1987

JIM NAPIERALA

Drum, 1989

FORD BECKMAN

Untitled
Plywood Painting, 1989
Enamel and industrial varnish on plywood,
two panels, 72 x 72 each
Collection of Dr. Giuseppe Panza di Biumo
Not in exhibition

painted on plywood supports, each panel is divided: one part is painted with white enamel and the other is raw plywood coated with industrial varnish. Beckman once used the highest grades of plywood for his supports; today, however, he uses lower, cheaper grades because of their warping and surface irregularities, imperfections that are important to the symbolic content of his work. His paintings are about a contrast of forces—the chaotic and organic, as represented by the plywood, and the perfect and ethereal, as expressed by the gleaming white paint in the Suprematist tradition.

Not whiteness but studied shades and contrasts of color play an evocative role in Russell Maltz's abstractions. Maltz works with both found and purchased wood planks (most often plywood), which he stacks in carefully studied arrangements against the wall. Even when covered with several layers of paint, the grain of the wood generally shows through and plays a significant role. Basic to Maltz's work is the tension between its physical reality, as stated by the planks, the grain, and the fact that it exists in real space, and the transporting nature of the color. Maltz greatly admires the paintings of the Abstract Expressionist Mark Rothko, in which large fields of color emotionally envelop the viewer. "You can always go back to a Rothko and see an unknown place," Maltz says, ". . . no story, no content, nothing except what it is." Not unexpectedly, his paintings are involved with a sense of place and time, being often inspired by landscapes and sites he has visited. The title and green color of the painting *Rayon Vert* (Green Ray) of 1988 derive from a Buñuel film in which the term was used to describe the afterglow that appears at the horizon for a brief moment after sunset.

John R. Thompson also works with wooden panels in an abstract mode, but his primary concern is the interaction of forms in space. His approach to his plywood panels is extremely intrusive: he slices into

them, cuts them apart, and then pieces them back together, building up surfaces through the addition not only of sawdust (which variegates the surface texture) but of shapes made up from other pieces of wood. The top half of *Constructive Topography* (1989) is a painted circle, a target filled with concentric, alternating, black and white rings. This circle is intersected at its center by the apex of the white triangle that occupies the bottom half of the painting and is itself overlapped by two concentric circles, one white, the other off-white. In the lower right quadrant of the target a three-dimensional pyramidal form manages to retain the concentric rings of the target and the straight-line precision of the triangle. Three other protrusions appear in the form of concentric build-ups of topographical shapes. These relief elements translate into three-dimensions the illusionistic patterns found on wood grain, which are glimpsed in the section of exposed plywood seen at the top of the painting.

In contrast to Thompson's extensive manipulations are the works of Sherrie Levine. In the early 1980s, Levine offered reproductions of photographs and other images by modern masters as her own works of art. In a series begun in 1985, including *Untitled* (*Golden Knots: 1*) of 1987, she presents sheets of plywood framed and set under glass, wholly unworked except for the knots, which she painted gold. Although continuing to challenge artistic conventions regarding authorship and originality (among other things), Levine's plywood paintings are open to art historical and symbolic allusions. The random nature of the placement of the knots has led some critics to compare her paintings to Jean Arp's Dadaist work of the teens, which used chance procedures, while the craggy character of the wood-grain pattern has been seen by others as a parody of the moody works of the Abstract Expressionist Clyfford Still. Some writers have suggested that the wood, with its associations of warmth and its elliptically shaped knots, can be seen as female and the placement of the plywood panels under glass represents unfulfilled desire. Levine herself has noted the resemblance of the pattern of the grain to veils of rain or tears.

In the Starn Twins' *Watson with Ribbon* (1988), which features a detail from John Singleton Copley's famous watery disaster *Watson and the Shark*, the plywood grain refers to the ripples and bubbles of a body

RUSSELL MALTZ

Rayon Vert, 1988

SHERRIE LEVINE

Untitled (Golden Knots: 1), 1987

of water. The Starn Twins turn this detail upside down, transforming the unfortunate struggling Watson into a graceful, ethereal figure with long, flowing hair and the shark into an ambiguous rounded form. The rope that loops down to curl around Watson's arm is echoed by the rectilinear disposition of the black ribbon attached to the plywood support. Although the Starns use photographic images, the effect is a handmade quality and physicality generally associated with painting. Their work is also on the scale of painting, and they often draw their romantic scenes from the canons of art history. The brothers subject the images to all sorts of process violations—they scratch the negatives and fold, stain, and tear the prints, often piecing images together with Scotch tape and printing both on paper and transparent film. Plywood plays a significant role in the mounting and framing of the photographic images. It functions structurally, but because of its mundane, unarty character, it also serves as an essential counterpoint, much like the Scotch tape, to the distinctly arty and sometimes too-precious subject matter.

Vikky Alexander also deals with photographic imagery and issues of presentation and framing in two different groups of work. In the first, the *Northern Pine Square Tile* series of 1988, square sections cut out of decorative, wall-size photomurals of landscapes are mounted in the center of larger square panels, where they are framed by strips of wood-grain contact paper. The effect of framing is accentuated, and an unreal, Op Art quality is created because the direction of the *faux* grain on all four sides of the picture forms a square. These works continue, in the *faux bois* tradition of Cubism, to investigate the issue of reality vs. illusion. But they do so as a cultural critique: commercially produced imitation materials comment on culture's distance from nature and on the way in which nature is reinterpreted by culture. In Alexander's more recent series, *Mahogany Square Tile* of 1989, landscape images derived from decorative photomurals are mounted on mahogany supports. These later images seem less critical and more romantic; the grain of the mahogany has a fluidity that harmonizes with the watery imagery of the photomural. At the same time, the collaging of the photomural on the rich, warm mahogany (rather than on the cooler northern pine) suggests that the work be viewed as an

element of interior decoration, a long-standing preoccupation of the artist.

Richard Artschwager has worked with *faux bois* for the past thirty years, both in the form of wood-grain formica and of a painted, wildly exaggerated grisaille wood grain. The primary subject of his work is furniture (he was once a furniture designer) and he uses his false materials literally, as references to the wood of tables, chairs, and so on. Just as his wood is removed from the original—pictures of the thing rather than the thing itself—his tables and chairs are separated from their traditional function as furniture, thus bringing them to the edge of abstraction. Since 1985 Artschwager has been engaged in creating a series of paintings of tabletops, of which the most recent is *Sitting* of 1989–90. A wood-grain formica table and chair seen from above are embedded in a black formica ground. A large golden ring sketched onto the table with acrylic paint suggests a dinner plate. Although the implied place setting might seem to offer the viewer an invitation to participate, the painting's high degree of abstraction and competing levels of artifice (which is more fake—the wood or the plate?) quickly ward off all such associations.

RICHARD ARTSCHWAGER

Sitting, 1989–90

It is the associations that seem to be built into wood and its grain—of warmth, hominess, and emotionality, of the organic and biomorphic, and of the irregular and chaotic—that make wood panels appealing to so many artists working today. That wood is cheap and readily available and that it is at once the product of nature and industry, that it offers readymade patterns, that it can be used structurally, and that it both asserts and denies spatial illusions—all these features surely contribute to its popularity. One wonders whether, in certain respects, the widespread exploitation of wood and the patterns of wood grain in recent art may not be a contemporary alternative to the Cartesian grid that helped artists of the sixties and seventies achieve a controlled rationality and coolness. Wood-grain patterns, by contrast, are fluid and unpredictable, appropriate to a time in which artists are once again seeking an emotional and allusive art that responds both to the demands of culture and the natural world.

STARN TWINS

Watson with Ribbon, 1988

Works in the Exhibition

Dimensions are in inches; height precedes width precedes depth.

VIKKY ALEXANDER (b. 1959)

Northern Pine Square Tile #8, 1988
Paper on birch, 24 x 24
Collection of the artist

Northern Pine Square Tile #10, 1988
Paper on birch, 24 x 24
Collection of the artist

Mahogany Square Tile #5, 1989
Paper and masonite on mahogany, 24 x 24
Collection of the artist

Mahogany Square Tile #8, 1989
Paper and masonite on mahogany, 24 x 24
Collection of the artist

RICHARD ARTSCHWAGER (b. 1923)

Sitting, 1989–90
Acrylic on formica on plywood with pine frame, 55 x 76¼
Collection of the artist

FORD BECKMAN (b. 1952)

Untitled
Plywood Painting, 1990
Enamel and industrial varnish on plywood, two panels, 88 x 152 overall
Collection of the artist

MICHAEL BYRON (b. 1954)

A Fool's Goodbye #2, 1989
Oil and silkscreen on plywood, 47 x 84
Lawrence Oliver Gallery, Philadelphia

CARROLL DUNHAM (b. 1949)

Beyond Zebra, 1984–88
Casein, dry pigment, pencil, charcoal, and casein emulsion on zebrawood veneer, 87 x 58
Collection of the artist

Pine Gap, 1985–86
Mixed media on pine and elm veneers, 77 x 41
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Purchase, with funds from The Mnuchin Foundation 86.36

JULIE FROMME (b. 1956)

American Saint, 1989
Oil on plywood, 32 x 25
Julian Pretto Gallery, New York

Onionhead, 1989
Oil on pine, two panels, 34 x 22½ overall
Julian Pretto Gallery, New York

Untitled, 1989
Oil on pine, 27 x 14
Julian Pretto Gallery, New York

ROBERT HELM (b. 1943)

Bonfire, 1983
Oil on wood with wood inlay, three panels: center panel, 30 x 23¼ x 1½; side panels, 19¾ x 13¼ x 1½ each
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Bagley Wright

Wind on Monday, 1987
Oil on wood with ash inlay, 50¼ x 39¼
Private collection

SHERRIE LEVINE (b. 1947)

Untitled (Golden Knots: 1), 1987
Oil on plywood under plexiglass, 62⅝ x 50⁹⁄₁₆ x 3½
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Purchase, with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee 88.48a-b

Untitled (Ignatz: 2), 1988
Casein on mahogany, 24 x 20
Kroyer Corporation, New York; courtesy Mary Boone Gallery, New York

Untitled (Ignatz: 4), 1988
Casein on mahogany, 24 x 20
Collection of Vijak Mahdavi and Bernardo Nadal-Ginard; courtesy Mary Boone Gallery, New York

RUSSELL MALTZ (b. 1952)

Rayon Vert, 1988
Enamel on plywood, 96 x 60½ x 10
Stark Gallery, New York

MICHAEL MAZUR (b. 1935)

Confluence, 1989
Acrylic on plywood, 27½ x 23¾
Fawbush Gallery, New York

Texas Evening Bayou, 1989
Acrylic on birch plywood, 12 x 53
Fawbush Gallery, New York

JIM NAPIERALA (b. 1956)

Display, 1989
Oil, encaustic, and gold leaf on birch plywood and pine, three panels, 17 x 24 overall
Collection of Gregg Mayer; courtesy Luise Ross Gallery, New York

Document, 1989
Oil, encaustic, and gold leaf on fir plywood and pine, three panels, 36 x 34 overall
Luise Ross Gallery, New York

Drum, 1989
Oil and encaustic on pine, three panels, 26 x 24 overall
Collection of Linda and Harry Macklowe

RAY SMITH (b. 1959)

La Niña de los Lirios, 1987
Oil, charcoal, and lacquer on pine, 84 x 100½
Collection of Marjory Jacobson and Marshall Smith

NED SMYTH (b. 1948)

Flora Series: Fusion, 1989
Pigment and cement on lauan, five panels, 96 x 96 overall
Collection of the artist

STARN TWINS (Douglas and Michael, b. 1961)

Film Rembrandt with Plexi and Glue, 1987–88
Toned ortho film with tape, glue, plexiglass, and birch, 35 x 31
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Pittman

Watson with Ribbon, 1988
Toned silver print with plywood and ribbon, 41 x 21
Collection of Milton Fine

Rainforest with Ciba and Woodblocks, 1989
Toned silver print with ortho film, tape, fir plywood, glue, and Cibachrome, 70 x 126
Collection of Peter Langer; courtesy Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York

JOHN R. THOMPSON (b. 1947)

Circular Alignment, 1989
Enamel, oil, varnish, and pencil on plywood, 20¾ x 20½ x 1
Luise Ross Gallery, New York

Constructive Topography, 1989
Enamel, varnish, oil, pencil, and sawdust on plywood, 24¼ x 22¼ x 1
Luise Ross Gallery, New York

Focused Resolution, 1989
Enamel, varnish, oil, pencil, and sawdust on plywood, 24¼ x 22¼ x 1
Collection of Darial Sneed; courtesy Luise Ross Gallery, New York

Underlying Content, 1989
Enamel, pencil, and varnish on plywood, 13½ x 14½ x 2
Collection of Ralf Astermann; courtesy Luise Ross Gallery, New York

JOHN TORREANO (b. 1941)

P.M.'s Mum, 1986
Enamel and gems on plywood, two panels, 90 x 96 overall
Collection of the artist

Going, 1989
Enamel, gems, and wood balls on plywood, 20 x 20
Collection of the artist

Whitney Museum of American Art
Fairfield County

One Champion Plaza
Stamford, Connecticut 06921
(203) 358–7652

Hours

Tuesday–Saturday, 11:00–5:00
Free admission

Gallery Talks

Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, 12:30
Tours by appointment

Staff

Pamela Gruninger Perkins
Head, Branch Museums

Roni Feinstein
Branch Director

Cynthia Roznoy
Manager

Holly Manley
Gallery Assistant

Holly Flickinger
Gallery Assistant

Photograph credits
John Berens (Torreano)
Geoffrey Clements (Dunham, Levine)
D. James Dee (Fronme, Smyth)
R. Lorenzson (Napierala, Thompson)
Zindman/Fremont (Helm)

Design
Elizabeth Finger

Typesetting
Michael and Winifred Bixler

Printing
Meridian Printing